

PROJECT:
Bonneville Lock and Dam

PARTNER:
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Introduction:

Discover Your Northwest (DYNW) serves as a cooperating association at the Bonneville Lock and Dam Visitor Center and has become the kind of partner all agencies hope for. Without their partnership, many events, projects and visitor services at Bonneville Dam would not come to fruition or be as successful. This partner's enthusiasm is ever constant and often exceeds expectation. DYNW support of interpretive services and sharing the Corps missions helps educate visitors about the Corps' good work for the region and nation. It also supports staff, volunteers and community.

Their Mission: "Discover Your Northwest is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit social enterprise providing on-site resources helping visitors have a great experience when visiting Northwest public lands. Discover Your Northwest promotes the discovery of northwest public lands, enriches the experience of visitors, and builds community stewardship of these special places today and for generations to come."

The Corps has partnered with DYNW (Originally Pacific Northwest Parks and Forests Association) since 1990. The relationship has steadily grown to become very successful one. DYNW appreciates and supports Bonneville staff's innovative efforts to create visitor connections to our natural and manmade environments.

Discover Your Northwest serves the public by operating two bookstores at Bonneville visitor areas and supporting the volunteer program to operate these stores. One store is operated year-round and is located at Bradford Island Visitor Center in Oregon. The other is operated seasonally and is located at the Washington Shore Visitor Facilities in Washington. A full-time on-site manager is paid by DYNW through proceeds from sales. Additionally, funding support provided by the DYNW helps park rangers at Bonneville Dam accomplish many field level products, projects, and programs.

The Corps provides space for the stores, space for storing supplies and product display materials, power, and phone.

(1) Creativity and originality (meeting needs of customers)

The DYNW Bookstores sell a variety of educational and regionally themed products specifically to meet the needs of our visitors. An informal "scope of sales" agreement exists to keep out items that do not relate to the interpretive mission. Products such as books, DVD's, posters and maps share local, historical, and educational information; as well as regional perspectives. DYNW also works with local vendors to provide products specific to Bonneville Dam: postcards, mugs, puzzles, posters, sweatshirts, bookmarks, and other items visitors enjoy.

Volunteers or paid staff members operate the stores not only to provide service by selling items, but also to answer questions and give directions to local attractions.

DYNW has consistently worked with USACE staff through their interpretive and education efforts to creatively meet customer needs and desires for information. Some of these creative and innovative efforts are addressed in the public education section below.

(2) Improvement in Public Awareness

Bonneville Lock and Dam Visitor Center is the most visited Corps of Engineers visitor center in the country with over 600,000 visitors annually. This is, in part, due to the financial support DYNW provides for advertising the unique and special features of our site. DYNW helped place project visitor information in the Portland Monthly, Kid's Gorge Guide, Best Gorge Map Brochure, and Oregon Travel and Recreation Guide among other publications. In addition, web information is available on the Oregon Trail and Recreation Directory and on the DYNW web site as well. DYNW also funded a flight by a professional photographer volunteer who took

needed aerial photos of Bonneville. These and other photos were used to make post cards for sale in the bookstore and on our USACE web site for e-mailing to friends.

In addition to sharing information for visitors, the biggest benefit that USACE receives from DYNW is their unwavering support of our public education efforts to share the Corps missions, activities and successes with local, national and even international visitors.

(3) Public education

Discover Your Northwest understands the value of visitor contacts that provoke visitor curiosity and questions – leading them to care for and support our public lands. Through creative and cutting-edge interpretive props, Bonneville Rangers are able to engage different visitor learning styles. In the past several years DYNW has provided:

- Five digital photo frames displaying historic photos at all three visitor centers at Bonneville Dam – sharing the legacy of the Corps of Engineers in the Pacific Northwest. Representative photos are also available on our FlickrR site.
- Four lecterns are now available in the visitor center so that visitors may write about and share their historical connections to Bonneville Dam. In the past, opportunities like this to collect informal histories would have been lost.
- Five interactive touch screen displays are now available that provide interactive educational programs about fish migration and the navigation lock and the Corps Story.
- Four computers that run power point locations for interpreters to give programs on large screen monitors. While not in use the “screen savers” scroll answers to commonly asked questions and display key messages.

DYNW has also paid for efforts such as converting old but still useful VHS movies to DVD for use in the theaters for public viewing. This makes it possible to have a variety of films giving the public numerous viewing and learning options during their stay. Staff can research and increase their knowledge using the books DYNW donated to the visitor center library. The convenience of having recently published books available in the staff library for program development leads to well-informed and insightful programs that engage our visitors.

(4) Accomplishment of Management Objectives

As the most visited Corps visitor center, the primary goal at Bonneville is to share the Corps messages and information about our value to the nation. To accomplish this basic goal of interpretation and education, the park ranger and volunteer staff need necessary training to maintain their skills. DYNW paid for two volunteers to become Certified Interpretive Guides – a course offered by the National Association for Interpretation and taught by in-house staff. In addition, a six-book “NAI Certified Interpretive Guide course reference set” was added to the staff library.

Bonneville Lock and Dam developed a nationally recognized volunteer program, in part due to the support provided by DYNW. In today’s climate of limited budgets and “doing more with less,” the interpretive staff could not accomplish all that is necessary without the aid of skilled, well-trained volunteers. Volunteers allow park rangers the time to accomplish management tasks, program development, database management and other requirements.

Because limited funds do not allow the Corps to provide monetary or gift rewards for volunteers in any substantial way, DYNW steps in to fill the gap. Volunteers help operate both bookstores, staff the visitor information desks, and do a variety of other work needed in and around the visitor facilities at Bonneville Lock and Dam during the peak visitation season. The

Bonneville Volunteer Coordinator rarely has to recruit for new volunteers because almost everyone returns year after year or recommends other volunteers due to the successful partnership between USACE and DYNW. Each year DYNW underwrites the annual volunteer appreciation dinner at the end of the season. This dinner is catered at a neighboring resort where the DYNW and Corps interpretive staff shows their appreciation to the volunteers. They have consistently supported the volunteer program by providing a shared clothes washer and dryer and funded Wi-Fi internet installation and monthly access for all the volunteers – a huge benefit for Bonneville volunteers who live in RV's.

Any donated funds collected by DYNW are directly returned to Bonneville to support interpretive programming and mission accomplishment. DYNW purchased button making equipment for project use (cutting press, board, button parts, etc.). When visitors drop a donation in the donation box, they are invited to take a button. Donations increased nearly tenfold as a result! The increased funds help share the Corps missions, activities and successes with visitors, provide a variety of experiential learning to meet diverse learning styles and audiences, and educate volunteers and staff.

(5) Involving other partners

DYNW also partners with the Corps at The Dalles Lock and Dam and the US Forest Service in the Columbia Gorge Scenic Area. As a result of the USFS connection, our DYNW bookstore manager is able to supply the Bonneville Visitor Centers with scenic area maps and the "Gorge Vista" brochure.

The Corps of Engineers frequently partners with federal, state, and local agencies to provide special event booths at outreach events. The Corps and their partners benefit from the supplies and materials provided by DYNW. Each year DYNW underwrites the cost of resource materials for Columbia Camp, a teacher education workshop hosted by the Corps, US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Water Resources Education Center.

Recently, Bonneville Visitor Center received a generous donation of a 50" flat screen television. To help take advantage of this excellent teaching tool, DYNW purchased wall mounts and a computer so that the monitor may be used during interpretive programs at the Bradford Island Visitor Center. Since then, three more power point stations have been set up using stand-alone computers purchased by DYNW.

One of the most popular websites in the Portland District is the "Fish Cam." Due to limited bandwidth, the Corps could not offer live streaming video. Discover Your Northwest developed an informal agreement with an internet service provider (Sawtooth Technologies) to install equipment to transfer a live stream from the Corps' camera to the network. DYNW also arranged for a local Chamber of Commerce (Skamania County) to pay the monthly fees to the internet service provider to keep the service running on the local Chamber's web site. The Corps formalized this agreement using the Challenge Partnership Program. All partners benefit. Visitors can view live stream fish passage, the Corps website does not exceed it's band width or pay monthly fees, and Skamania County received increased visitors to their web site. This is an excellent example of positive partnership outcomes for all.

(6) Serving Diverse Audiences

Bonneville's partnership with DYNW has strengthened and improved the ability to serve diverse audiences each year. School groups, cruise ship passengers, international dignitaries, visitors to special events, and visitors from the USA and the world benefit from the Corps / DYNW partnership through skilled interpreters and exceptional displays and programming.

During the month April a few years ago, the Bonneville visitor log showed that people from 43 countries and all 50 states had been to the visitor center in that month! DYNW paid for some of the six foreign language translations provided by the Visitor Center.

With support from DYNW the Corps is able to cater to a variety of visitor backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, abilities, and cultures. New props for interpretive programs give visitors something to touch, feel, see, or smell to help them understand what happens at Bonneville Dam and throughout the Corps. The addition of stand-alone computer displays, touch screens, geocache prizes, live streaming fish cameras, and podiums for sharing personal history about Bonneville all make it possible to touch a diverse audience.

For “how to” articles about the different technologies used at the Bonneville Lock and Dam Visitor Center and supported by DYNW go to:

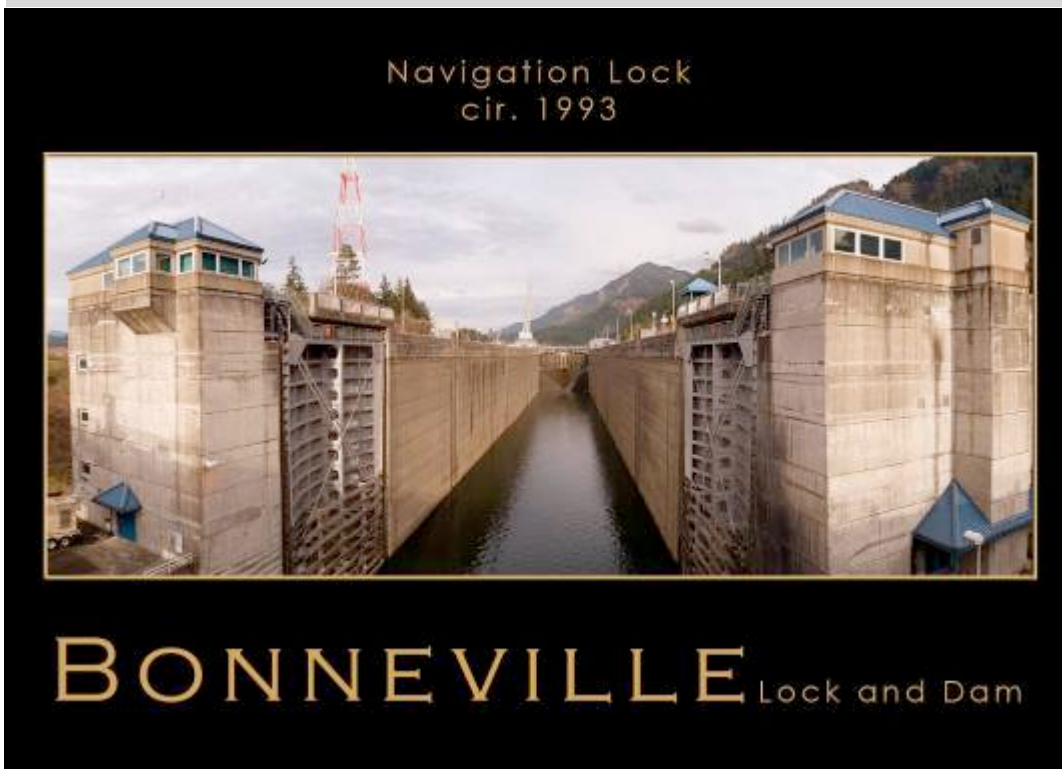
<http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/interpretive/tools.cfm>

Go to “Search exchange” and type “technology” in the Keyword Search.

SUPPORTING MATERIAL



Discover Your Northwest funded professional volunteer photographer to take aerial and site photos for post cards and historic purposes.





Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner – fully catered and held at neighboring resort.



Buttons free with donation have greatly increased donations. The button machine and materials were purchased by Discover Your Northwest. Donation funds help support mission, goals and interpretive efforts.



Thematic products available in DYNW Book Store. Products like these help to publicize Corps facilities at Bonneville.



To honor the sudden death of a long-time Ranger at Bonneville, DYNW funded a commemorative bench and this sign – showing themselves to be truly vested partners and committed to the well being of Bonneville staff during a time of loss.



Discover Your Northwest funded the purchase of artwork crafted by a local artist to enhance the visitor center entrance. Stainless steel salmon, steelhead, and herons were placed in a “gravel salmon stream” in front of the Bradford Island Visitor Center – receiving many compliments from visitors and staff.

